

THE EDWARDS PLACE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

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# Illinois Springfield

## Edwards Place

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



**BEFORE THE FIREPLACE** in this room of the Edwards home located on the present site of the Centennial building, Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married in 1842. The room in this picture was practically as it was when the wedding was performed.

(Photo by A. W. Kessberger)

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1937

## Room Where Lincoln Was Married



Room in the Ninian Edwards home on south Second street, now the site of the Centennial building, in which Mary Todd, sister of Mrs. Edwards was married to Abraham Lincoln. The fireplace formed the background for the couple during the ceremony. It was there that both Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, rivals in politics, courted Miss Todd.



# New Lincoln Attraction for Springfield

By Robert Howard

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—The latest step in the restoration of historic Springfield is a reproduction of the house in which Abraham Lincoln married into a prominent Kentucky family.



Howard

Ninian W. Edwards, son of a former Illinois governor, in 1836 built the original two story brick house of classic lines for his bride, the former Elizabeth Todd of Lexington, Ky. In it her younger sister Mary visited and in time married the sad faced lawyer who became the Civil war President. It is the house to which Mary Lincoln returned as a widow and recluse. In it she died.

The "House Where Lincoln Married," reproduced with authentic furnishings and operated privately as a museum by a Springfield group, contains a replica of the parlor in which the wedding, once called off, took place Nov. 4, 1842. The story of Lincoln's life, from a Kentucky log cabin to the White House, is told in 20 dioramas.

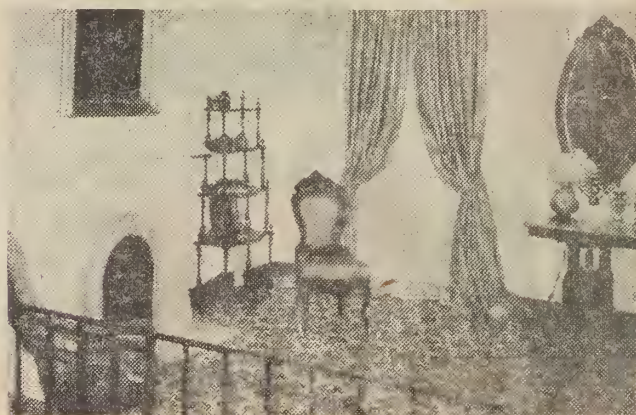
"This is the only place in Springfield, without going to a library, where visitors can become familiar with the development of Lincoln as a world figure," said Dr. Gershon K. Greening, head of the group which owns the Ninian Edwards house.

It stands four doors north of the somewhat smaller house, now owned by the state of Illinois, in which Mary and Abraham Lincoln lived from 1844 to 1861.

Historic restoration, by the state and free enterprise, testifies to Springfield's revived interest in its Lincoln legacy. The old state capitol, which also dates back to the pre-Civil war era, is being restored on the downtown square site by the state, which also has jurisdiction over the Lincoln



This is the restored Ninian Edwards home in Springfield, Ill. It is the house in which Abraham Lincoln married Mary Todd. The story of Lincoln's life, from a Kentucky cabin to the White House, is told in 20 dioramas inside the house.



Parlor in the Edwards home in Springfield looks much as it did in Lincoln's day. The home was built by Ninian Edwards, son of a former Illinois governor, who built it for his bride Elizabeth Todd, older sister of Mary.

home and the tomb in Oak Ridge cemetery. The old railroad station from which the Lincolns took the train to Washington is privately operated as a tourist attraction. Another group has undertaken restoration of one of Lincoln's law offices on the square.

Originally the Ninian W. Edwards home stood six blocks away and was used successively as a mansion, school, and apartment building. The aristocratic Edwards was something of a social sponsor of young Lincoln. Benjamin Edwards, a

brother, lived in a spacious home north of the business district that now is Springfield's art center. Their father, Ninian Edwards, had been a slaveholder from Kentucky, Illinois territorial governor, United States senator, and the state's third governor.

Ninian Wirt Edwards served with Lincoln as a member of Sangamon county's "Long Nine" in the legislature. Later

he became the first state superintendent of public instruction, by appointment, but refused to follow Lincoln into the Republican party. During the Civil war, Lincoln gave him a minor appointment as a captain of the commissary corps.

Ninian and Elizabeth Edwards opposed the wedding on the ground that Lincoln was socially beneath the Todds. During a morose spell, Lincoln once broke their engagement. When they stood in the Edwards parlor before the Rev. Charles Dresser, Lincoln was 33 and his bride 10 years younger.

Mary Todd Lincoln had two other sisters in Springfield. Frances was married to Dr. William Wallace, the Lincoln family physician, and Anna to Clark M. Smith, a prosperous merchant on the south side of the square.

"The Ninian Edwards home and museum was conceived as a means of enhancing the appearance of the Lincoln home area and of providing a visual biography of Lincoln," Dr. Greening said. The dioramas are the work of Arthur G. Sieving of Springfield.



*The Lincoln Museum*  
*Fort Wayne, Indiana*

Research #456

Rena Brown

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August 21, 1996

Dear Rena:

This is in reply to your request regarding relationship between Mary Tood  
Lincoln and Albert Gallatin Edwards.

We find Mary Todd Lincoln's sister, Elizabeth Todd married Ninian Wirt Edwards,  
son of Illinois territorial governor Ninian Edwards (which makes the governor  
Elizabeth's father-in-law) and Albert Gallatin Edwards was the governor's  
second son (which makes him Elizabeth's brother-in-law).

Enclosed is a biographical sketch of Albert which is put out by A G Edwards.

Hope this helps.

Yours very truly,

THE LINCOLN MUSEUM

James E. Eber  
Research Assistant

Enclosure

*John L. Hinrichs*  
*Director*



## A.G. Edwards: A 107-Year-Old Legacy

It has often been noted that the apple never falls far from the tree. To illustrate this observation, one need look no further than the family tree of A.G. Edwards & Sons Inc., the prestigious brokerage firm headquartered in St. Louis, and continuously managed by family members since its inception in 1887.

Founder Albert Gallatin Edwards was born Oct. 15, 1812, in Lexington, Ky. The second son of Illinois Governor Ninian W. Edwards, Albert graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point at 20 years of age.

Assigned to the Mounted Rangers—the U.S. Army's first permanent cavalry regiment at Jefferson Barracks, south of St. Louis—Albert served for three years, before resigning from the service four days after his wedding in 1835. He immediately joined William L. Ewing, a St. Louis company specializing in providing goods to stores throughout the Southwest.

Albert stayed with William L. Ewing until the early 1860s, during which time he developed a political alliance with Abraham Lincoln. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Albert and the other pro-Union supporters battled against Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, a Confederate sympathizer. The pro-secession troops were defeated and Missouri did not secede from the Union. Albert was then commissioned a brigadier general in the Missouri State Militia.

Six days before he was assassinated, Lincoln appointed Albert assistant secretary of the Treasury for the Sub-Treasury Bank in St. Louis. General Edwards held this post until his resignation in 1887, when he and his eldest son, Benjamin Franklin Edwards, formed a partnership to open A.G. Edwards & Son, a brokerage company located in the heart of St. Louis' financial district. Within months, the firm became the only St. Louis brokerage handling trades for local banks on the NYSE. Three years later, Benjamin's younger brother, George Lane, joined the firm. An "s" was added to the company's name, and A.G. Edwards & Sons was well on its way to establishing itself as the nation's largest brokerage firm head-



Albert Gallatin Edwards

quartered outside of New York City.

"The firm was headquartered in St. Louis to maintain an economic perspective without succumbing to the herd mentality of Wall Street," said Jan Broderick, A.G. Edwards curator of collections and company historian. "It allowed Edwards to develop its own philosophy and focus on its strategy of serving smaller communities throughout the Midwest."

In 1898, Edwards purchased a seat on the NYSE, and in 1900

opened its first New York office.

In 1891, George Lane Edwards became managing partner. He ran the company until 1919, after which another brother, Albert Ninian Edwards, took command. The sale of Liberty Bonds during World War I had uncovered an investor base largely ignored until then, and Edwards aggressively pursued these new investors with much success.

Presley W. Edwards, Benjamin Edwards' son, joined the firm in 1925 and became managing partner four years later, a post he held until 1965. Presley's tenure saw Edwards weather the storm of Black Thursday where the largest single client loss was only \$5,000 in an account of more than \$1 million. Losses were kept at a minimum because Edwards followed a policy of not allowing stocks to be purchased on the low margins typically available in other parts of the country. Also at the time of the Crash, Edwards' employees worked 'round the clock for two days and nights contacting customers.

Economic hardships of the Great Depression gave way to the equally harsh reality of World War II. Although Presley envisioned opening branch offices in other states, it didn't happen until after the end of the war.

In 1949 under Presley's guidance, Edwards became the first brokerage firm outside of New York to install an IBM computer system. They issued their first computerized customer statement in 1952.

Benjamin F. Edwards III, Presley's son, joined the firm in 1956, and in 1966 became the company's newest managing partner. In the intervening years, Ben Edwards has continued to enrich the legacy of A.G. Edwards' proud heritage. —Jonas Flagg



Benjamin Franklin Edwards



George Lane Edwards



Albert Ninian Edwards



Presley W. Edwards

PHOTOGRAPHS: MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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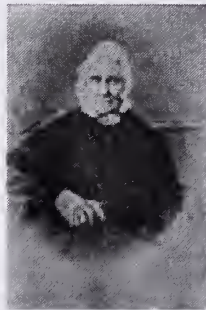
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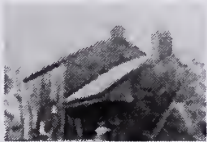
  
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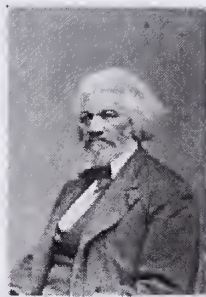
  
Exterior Edward's Residence, Springfield, Illinois  
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Edward's Residence, Springfield, Illinois, Where Lincoln was Married  
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The Old McCormack House, Where Lincoln Stopped in Danville, Illinois  
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Inn, Route 125. Lincoln Stayed Here, Old Broadwell Tavern  
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House Where Lincoln Slept on Political Tour, South of Elgin, Illinois  
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Frederick Douglass  
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## Edwards Place's interior to be renovated

By CHRIS DETTRO

**THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER**

Posted Jun 29, 2011 @ 10:56 PM

Last update Jun 30, 2011 @ 06:26 AM



**Edwards Place**, the 178-year-old building that has housed the Springfield Art Association since 1914, will be taking on a new interior look — actually an old interior look — in conjunction with the association's centennial that begins next year.

Art association members and historical preservationists earlier this week heard recommendations from Anne Sullivan, principal of **Sullivan Preservation** in Chicago, on how to restore the inside of the home at 700 N. Fourth St. to its mid-1800s appearance.

Edwards Place is the oldest home in Springfield on its original foundation. Once a center of social activity in Springfield, the home saw prominent citizens and politicians such as Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas entertained at lavish dinner parties, while the grounds played host to many summer picnics and political rallies.

Sullivan and her team were commissioned by the art association to create a framework for future restoration of Edwards Place to a historically appropriate appearance, said Erika Holst, curator of collections for the art association.

Sullivan put the total cost of renovation at around \$700,000, and Holst said the association will begin fundraising in conjunction with the centennial.

"A capital campaign will start with the centennial," she said. "Our target is to do it room by room."

She said Sullivan recommended the entryway be the first area restored because that's the first thing people see when they come into the house.

Edwards Place has 10 rooms and two hallway areas — one on each floor, Holst said.

Because of the many layers of history encompassed by Edwards Place since its construction in 1833, Sullivan recommended a broad era of interpretation.

The years from 1858 to 1876 were chosen in order to interpret the social connections between the Edwards and Lincoln families while capturing the alterations made to the home up to 1887, Holst said.

"The bulk of her presentation was presenting wallpaper, carpeting and interior wood finish samples," Holst said. A furniture layout and a conservation plan for the furnishings also were part of the study.

Holst said Sullivan's recommendations are largely for Rococo Revival designs, a style characterized by naturalistic motifs, asymmetry and light, fanciful designs.

"It's an appropriate choice based on what was known to be popular in Springfield in the mid-19th century and also based on what is known of Edwards family furniture and wallpaper selections," Holst said. Lincoln favored the same style in his own home.

Holst said Sullivan made an exception for the library by suggesting a Gothic Revival pattern that was typical of male, scholarly environments such as home libraries.

Sullivan also recommend committing space within the house — in the southeast bedroom, which has remained largely unchanged since the 1960s — to feature the Springfield Art Association and its development over the last century.

The home is furnished with Victorian furniture, including many pieces that belonged to the Edwards family. It also contains the "Lincoln Courting Couch" from the parlor of the Ninian Edwards home where Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married.

The study was funded by a \$20,000 grant from the Jeffris Heartland Fund, administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and matched by the art association.

In addition to Sullivan, the team doing the study consisted of historic-finishes specialist Robert Fitzgerald, who analyzed paint and wallpaper layers; and Craig Deller, a conservator who prepared condition reports and made suggestions for appropriate furniture use.

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### **Preservation expert's report**

Preservation expert Anne Sullivan in her report broke down the history of Edwards Place into six eras:

\* The Pre-Edwards Era, 1833-43. Edwards Place would have been one of the first brick dwellings in Springfield and was occupied by Dr. Thomas Houghan. The house represented Springfield's transition from a rural frontier community to a modern urban community.



\* The First Edwards Era, 1843-58. Benjamin Edwards and his family would occupy the house for more than 60 years. Within a few years of moving in, Edwards put on a significant addition that likely included a kitchen as well as the four rooms on the east side of the house. This expansion reflected his status as a member of Springfield's social and professional elite.

\* The Second Edwards Era, 1858-77. This period witnessed another remodeling of the house that transformed it from a 1½-story Vernacular Greek Revival into a high-style Italianate dwelling. All three Edwards daughters were married during this time, and after the Civil War, the middle daughter Alice (who continued to live at home after her marriage) took over as hostess of Edwards Place.

\* The Third Edwards Era, 1877-86. The period begins with interior remodeling in 1877 and concludes with Benjamin Edwards' death in 1886. These were likely quiet years for the elder Edwardses. Daughter Alice and her husband moved out in 1883.

\* The Fourth Edwards Era, 1886-1909/14. This is the time between Benjamin Edwards' death and the donation of the house to the Springfield Art Association. Helen Edwards lived a quiet, retiring life, occasionally joined by one or more of her grandchildren, who lived with her from time to time.

\* The Springfield Art Association Era, 1914-present. This era begins with the acquisition of the house by the association, which transformed it from a private dwelling to an arts institution that hoped to rival the Art Institute of Chicago.

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## HISTORY OF THE EDWARDS PLACE

EDWARDS PLACE IS THE OLDEST HOUSE ON ITS OWN GROUNDS IN SPRINGFIELD, AND FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY HAS BEEN DOMINANT IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE CITY. FROM 1833 TO 1909, IT WAS A GRACIOUS PRIVATE HOME. BUILT BY DR. THOMAS HOUGHAN, IT COMPRISED AT THAT TIME JUST THE KITCHEN AREAS OF TODAY. IN 1843, MR. AND MRS. BENJAMIN S. EDWARDS BOUGHT THE HOUSE AND, IN THE 1850'S REMODELED AND ENLARGED IT TO ITS PRESENT SPACIOUS PROPORTIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL STORY AND A HALF.

BENJAMIN S. EDWARDS, A LAWYER, WAS THE SON OF NINIAN EDWARDS, FIRST TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS, THIRD STATE GOVERNOR (1826-30). ANOTHER SON, NINIAN, MARRIED MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SISTER. THE BENJAMIN EDWARDS PLACE BECAME A CENTER OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE BEFORE AND DURING THE CIVIL WAR. ABRAHAM LINCOLN ONCE SPOKE FROM AN UPPER WINDOW TO A GATHERING IN THE GROVE, AND THE GROVE WAS ALSO THE SCENE OF A STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS RALLY WHEN IT WAS THE DESTINATION OF A CHARTERED TRAIN OF DOUGLAS SUPPORTERS FROM CHICAGO.

MRS. B. H. FERGUSON, DAUGHTER OF THE EDWARDS, DEEDED EDWARDS PLACE TO THE SPRINGFIELD ART ASSOCIATION IN 1913. SINCE THAT TIME, THE HOUSE HAS FUNCTIONED AS A COMBINATION CLUB, MUSEUM AND ART SCHOOL. IN 1937-38, AN ADJOINING GALLERY WAS BUILT TO THE EAST, AND CONSIDERABLE RESTORATION OF THE INTERIOR WAS ALSO DONE WITH PERIOD PIECES AND DECOR. THE SPIRIT OF THIS RESTORATION IS BEING CARRIED FORWARD STEADILY TODAY, UPSTAIRS AS WELL AS DOWN.

MANY OF THE FINE PIECES OF 19TH CENTURY FURNITURE ARE FROM SOME OF SPRINGFIELD'S OLDEST FAMILIES, AND RECALL THE VICTORIAN ERA OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S TIME. THERE ARE OTHER PIECES WHICH TOUCHED LINCOLN'S LIFE PERSONALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, THE EMPIRE COURTING SOFA FROM THE NINIAN EDWARDS HOME WHERE LINCOLN COURTED AND MARRIED MARY TODD; A MARBLE TOPPED CARVED WALNUT TABLE FROM LINCOLN'S HOME, AND SEVERAL DISHES WHICH ARE SAID TO HAVE BELONGED TO MARY TODD LINCOLN.

6. RESIDENCE OF NINIAN W. EDWARDS. It was in the home of Ninian Edwards, which stood just south of the present State Capitol on the site now occupied by the Centennial Building, that Lincoln came to know Mary Todd. They became engaged and were to be married Jan. 1, 1841. Just what happened on that "fatal" day is a question, but Lincoln did not appear, and the breaking of the engagement through his fault caused him deep humiliation and aggravated his melancholy. ~~BvI. p 298. gives a good treatment of this period.~~

*In months, he was desperately despondent and at times unfit for business - His partnership with Stuart terminated. "Logan, who seems to have sympathized with Lincoln," says Beardslee, "took him into his office as partner and the firm of Logan and Lincoln was announced May 14, 1841. BvI. ch. vi, is the best source for this period.*



4-6





HOUSE IN WHICH ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS MARRIED.  
THEN OWNED BY NATHAN W. EDWARDS, NOW OCCUPIED AS ST. AGATHA'S SCHOOL

PHH 208

From Works - by Nicolay & Hay

Vol. 3 - p. 208

4-12

14.

WHERE LINCOLN WAS MARRIED. This shows the parlor of the Ninian W. Edwards house shown in Plate 6. The old fire-place was doubtless bright on the wedding day and despite the modern accessories, helps us to vivify the events that took place before it. Rev. Charles Dresser was the minister, and the <sup>W</sup>edding service of the Episcopal Church was used for the first time in Springfield. Bvl.p.355.





THE ROOM - 1901. EDWARDS HOUSE  
 100 N. 1st St. N. Y. City. Col. of M.  
 100 N. 1st St. N. Y. City. Col. of M.

Wall - Boston 1-26-22

Dr. Wm. L. Loomis 1922



